

detecting the extracted probes and measuring the amount thereof or their respective amounts.

5. (Thrice-amended) A method according to Claim 3 wherein said specific or said universal probe is a *r*RNA-targeted probe.

6. (Thrice-amended) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising extracting said microorganisms in said sample by centrifugation.

7. (Twice-amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said contacting is performed following fixation of said whole cells.

14. (Thrice-amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein extracting of the hybridized probes includes extracting at a temperature higher than the melting temperature of the specific probe under consideration.

Remarks

Reconsideration of claims 1-30 is respectfully requested. Claims 1, 5-7 and 14 were amended.

The rejection of claims 1-30 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Manz et al., Wagner et al., De Los Reyes et al. in view of Marbarry is traversed with respect to the amended claims. The cited references do not describe "extracting the hybridized specific probes from their target by adding a denaturing agent to denature the probe-target complex", as claimed. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

The objection of claims 5 and 7 are addressed by amendments suggested by the examiner.

In view of the above, consideration and allowance are respectfully solicited.